

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3532

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 0675

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS--LEADERSHIP LINE-UP

REF: HONG KONG 0670

SUMMARY. A SHORT, SECRET SESSION OF THE NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, HELD WITHOUT MAO, HAS INSTALLED A MODERATE, PRAGMATIC GOVERNMENT UNDER PREMIER CHOU'S LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

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1. AFTER TEN YEARS WITHOUT ONE AND FIVE YEARS OF STRUGGLE OVER

CONVENING ONE, CHINA HAS HELD ITS FOURTH NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS, SWIFTLY, BRIEFLY, AND IN SECRET. IT WAS A SOBER AFFAIR AT WHICH THE MODERATES SHOWED THEY HAD THE VOTES AND, WITHOUT PURGING ANYONE, TOOK MOST OF THE SEATS AT THE TABLE. THE LEFT WAS THERE IN A SHOW OF UNITY PRETTY MUCH JUST TO WATCH THE MODERATES INSTALL THEMSELVES.

2. THE BIG NEWS IS MAO'S DISASSOCIATION WITH THE CONGRESS, WHICH FOLLOWS ON THE EXCEPTIONAL MOVE IN HOLDING A PARTY PLENUM WITHOUT HIM (REFTEL). IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE ANTI LIN-CONFUCIUS MOVEMENT LAUNCHED IN HIS NAME LAST YEAR AND NOW ABORTED WAS THE OLD CHAIRMAN'S LAST HURRAH. HOW HE FEELS ABOUT THIS WE ARE LEFT TO GUESS FROM HIS ABSENCE, HIS APPARENT SILENCE, AND THE FACT THAT WHILE THE CONGRESS WAS IN SESSION HE WAS FAR AWAY, CHATTING WITH A VISITING FOREIGNER. MAO'S LONG-TIME CLOSE ATTENDANT, WANG TUNG-HSING, WAS THE ONLY OTHER POLITBURO MEMBER UNACCOUNTED FOR IN THE CONGRESS COMMUNIQUE AND HE MAY HAVE FOLLOWED HIS MASTER INTO SEMI-SECLUSION.

3. IT WAS VERY MUCH AN OLD MEN'S CONGRESS, PRESIDED OVER BY MARSHAL CHU TEH WHO IS APPROACHING 90, AND ADDRESSED BY CHOU EN-LAI WHO STAYS AS PREMIER PRESUMABLY TO SPEAK FOR THE NEWLY INSTALLED MODERATE MAJORITY. NOTHING HAS BEEN SAID ABOUT THE POST OF STATE CHAIRMAN AND APPARENTLY IT HAS BEEN ELIMINATED. CHOU'S CLOSE ASSOCIATE YEH CHIEN-YING, WHO LIKE THE PREMIER IS IN HIS MID-SEVENTIES, IS CONFIRMED IN THE TOP MILITARY POST AS DEFENSE MINISTER, ALTHOUGH THE POSITION IS SEEMINGLY DOWNGRADED AND YEH IS NOT, AS FORMER DEFENSE CHIEFS WERE, AMONG THE LARGE GROUP OF VICE PREMIERS.

4. FURTHER MARKING THE REDUCTION OF THE MILITARY'S ROLE IN GOVERNMENT, ONLY ONE OF THE VICE PREMIERS, PEKING COMMANDER CHEN HSI-LIEN, IS A SOLDIER, COMPARED TO FOUR PREVIOUSLY. NIEH JUNG-CHEN HAS GIVEN UP HIS VICE PREMIERSHIP BUT WAS IN A PLACE OF HONOR AT THE CONGRESS.

5. MILITARY FIGURE LI TEH-SHENG EMERGES AS A MAJOR LOSER IN THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE. JUDGING FROM HIS SEAT AT THE CONGRESS HE HAS BEEN DEPRIVED OF HIS YEAR-OLD POSITION AS A PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN AND DEMOTED INTO THE RANKS OF THE POLITBURO.
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6. THOSE WHO DID WELL AT THE CONGRESS ARE A MIX OF OLD POLITICAL LEADERS, BUREAUCRATS, AND ECONOMIC PLANNERS, LIKE TENG HSIAO-PING WHO FOLLOWS UP ON HIS PARTY PROMOTION BY BECOMING FIRST VICE PREMIER, AND SOME SELECTED MIDDLE-AGE LEADERS OF WHOM CHANG CHUN-CHIAO STANDS OUT IN HIS NEW POST AS THE NUMBER TWO VICE PREMIER, ADVANCING OVER THE VETERAN LI HSIEN-NIEN. CHANG, WHO REPORTED TO THE CONGRESS ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION, IS THE HIGHEST

SCORER AMONG THE LEFTISTS, AND THE ONLY SHANGHAI FIGURE TO GET ANY TOP POST, WHICH IS A POOR SHOWING FOR THIS ACTIVIST GROUP, CONSIDERING THAT IT ALSO REPRESENTS CHINA'S MOST IMPORTANT INDUSTRIAL AND FINANCIAL BASE.

7. A MAN TO WATCH AMONG THE NEW VICE PREMIERS IS HUA KUO-FENG WHO HAS ALSO PICKED UP THE SENSITIVE POST OF PUBLIC SECURITY. HUA TAKES OVER FROM LI CHEN OF WHOM NOTHING HAS BEEN HEARD PUBLICLY SINCE REPORTS OF HIS ASSASSINATION IN LATE 1973. HUA WAS ATTACKED IN POSTERS LAST YEAR FOR HAVING PERSECUTED THE LEFT AS PROVINCIAL CHIEF IN HUNAN.

8. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER FEATURES TO THE NEW LEADERSHIP WORTH DISCUSSING AND WE WILL ADDRESS THIS IN A SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE. ONE FEATURE, HOWEVER, MUST NOT BE LEFT OUT OF THIS FIRST REPORT: CHINA HAS ITS FIRST WOMAN VICE PREMIER, WU KUEI-HSIEN, A NATIONAL MODEL. THIS MAY BE SALT IN THE WOUND FOR CHINAG CHING.

9. COMMENT. AT THIS TIME WE DO NOT HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION THE CHINESE ARE GOING TO PUBLISH ABOUT THIS CONGRESS. WE SHOULD SOON HAVE THE SPEECHES OF CHOU AND CHANG, AND THE AMENDED CONSTITUTION, PERHAPS TONIGHT OR TOMORROW, AND WE WILL ASSESS MATTERS FURTHER AT THAT TIME. JUDGING FROM WHAT WE HAVE SEEN, HOWEVER, FROM THE LEADERSHIP LINE-UP AND THE ATTENDANCE AT THE CONGRESS, WE WOULD EXPECT POLICY DIRECTION TO FOLLOW A CHOUIST-MODERATE, PRAGMATIC, AND CAREFUL LINE, WITHOUT RADICAL DEPARTURES.

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